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Whippany man on the job for 70 years in East Hanover

Dossier: Herman Goldman, clearance manager, Capitol Lighting, E. Hanover

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E. HANOVER — Herman Goldman, 96, of Whippany began working at a Capitol Lighting store the year before the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor in 1941. Seventy-plus years later he's still at it, working in the company's East Hanover store on Route 10.

No secret tips: The first thing most people ask him is how he remains so spry well into his 90s. Goldman attributes fate and destiny to his longevity.

"It's hard to say. I've always been very active. Money helps, but not always," he said. "It depends on the individual. I get up in the morning whether I feel good or not, and I move. The mind works, but the parts wear out. Just imagine, my heart has been beating without time off for 96 years. I've gotten my money's worth out of it."

His advice is not to worry about other people or what they have, but to concentrate on yourself.

"I take everything with a grain of salt," he said.

Changes: Having lived through 17 presidential administrations, Goldman is cautious about the 21st century.

"The 20th century was better. We've run into trouble and haven't lifted our heads from it yet," he said.

Saying "no" to retirement: "What would I do? Look at the four walls? I see people play cards, golf and then they start to argue with their spouse," he said.

A good year: Woodrow Wilson was president when Goldman was born on Aug. 17, 1913, in New York City. He grew up on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn before moving to Newark. He and his family lived in Brick Township for 30 years when he worked at the Capitol Lighting store in Eatontown.

A good company: Goldman has worked with four generations of the family that founded Capitol Lighting as a light fixture store in Newark in 1924. He began his retail career at Fortunoff when it was in Brooklyn and came to Capitol Lighting in Newark in June 1940.

He took a few years off during World War II to serve as a corporal in the Army training recruits in the U.S. After the war, he rejoined Capitol Lighting, working in East Orange before coming to the East Hanover store. He has worked as inventory manager and floor salesman and today is clearance manager and rebuilds broken light fixtures.

"I'm comfortable with the people and the family — they are good people," he said of his employer.

Extended family: Goldman was married to his late wife, Sophie, for 60 years. They had two children, two grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He lives in the Lester Senior Housing Community in Whippany and still enjoys reading mysteries.

Good genes: Goldman's siblings lived into their late 80s and 90s, he said.